

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/001,686

Examiner

Scott L. Jarrett

Applicant(s)

SWANKE ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 11/6/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,3-6,8-13 and 15-20.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material

5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Ms. Pamela Riley (Reg. No. 40,146) on December 11, 2006.

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of coordinating resources to complete a design project, said method comprising:

identifying tasks, comprising at least a first task and a second task, that must be finished to complete said design project based on design data;

receiving information about said tasks that must be finished in order to complete said design project, wherein said information comprises, for each one of said tasks, an appropriate resource, a data source, at least one design tool and a duration;

prioritizing said tasks based on dependency between said tasks to create a design project plan, wherein said first task is a prerequisite for said second task;

creating an encryption key for each one of said tasks,

wherein said encryption key comprises a name of said appropriate resource for said one of said task, a start date for said one of said tasks, an end date for said one of said tasks, said data source for said one of said tasks and said at least one design tool for said one of said tasks,

wherein said encryption key for each said one of said tasks is used to automatically notify said appropriate resource of task responsibilities and allows access by said appropriate resource to said data source and said at least one design tool ~~for a limited period of time~~ from said start date to said end date, and

wherein creation of said encryption key for said second task is gated until completion of said first task;

automatically monitoring work being performed on said tasks through a computerized network, wherein said monitoring comprises using a polling function to observe network activity of a resource to determine whether ~~[[a]]~~ said resource is actively working on a task; and

automatically notifying a project team leader of task completion status, overdue tasks, and tasks being ignored, based on said monitoring.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Original) The method in claim 1, further comprising automatically scheduling a meeting of all corresponding resources if a task becomes overdue.

4. (Original) The method in claim 1, further comprising producing periodic status reports

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based on said monitoring.

5. (Original) The method in claim 1, further comprising automatically notifying said resources of additional tasks as prerequisite tasks are completed.

6. (Original) The method in claim 1, further comprising automatically searching for additional resources for tasks that are overdue.

7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) A method of coordinating resources to complete a design project, said method comprising:

identifying tasks, comprising at least a first task and a second task, that must be finished to complete said design project based on design data;

receiving information about said tasks, wherein said information comprises, for each one of said tasks, an appropriate resource, a data source, at least one design tool and a duration;

prioritizing said tasks based on dependency between said tasks to create a design project plan, wherein said first task is a prerequisite for said second task;

creating an encryption key for each one of said tasks,

wherein said encryption key comprises a name of said appropriate resource for said one of said task, a start date for said one of said tasks, an end date for said one of said tasks, said data source for said one of said tasks and said at least one design tool for said one of said

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tasks,

wherein said encryption key for ~~each~~ said one of said tasks is used to automatically notify said appropriate resource of task responsibilities and allows access by said appropriate resource to said data source and said at least one design tool ~~for a limited period of time~~ from said start date to said end date, and

wherein creation of said encryption key for said second task is gated until completion of said first task;

storing said design project plan and said design data in a database;

automatically monitoring work being performed on said tasks through a computerized network, wherein said monitoring comprises using a polling function to observe whether a resource is actively working on a task; and

automatically notifying a project team leader of task completion status, overdue tasks, and tasks being ignored, based on said monitoring.

9. (Previously Presented) The method in claim 8, wherein said monitoring includes observing whether said resource is actively working on a said task exclusively by observing network activity of said resource.

10. (Original) The method in claim 8, further comprising automatically scheduling a meeting of all corresponding resources if a task becomes overdue.

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11. (Original) The method in claim 8, further comprising producing periodic status reports based on said monitoring.

12. (Original) The method in claim 8, further comprising automatically notifying said resources of additional tasks as prerequisite tasks are completed.

13. (Original) The method in claim 8, further comprising automatically searching for additional resources for tasks that are overdue.

14. (Cancelled).

15. (Currently Amended) A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method for coordinating resources to complete a design project, said method comprising:

identifying tasks, comprising at least a first task and a second task, that must be finished to complete said design project based on design data;

receiving information about said tasks ~~that must be finished in order to complete said design project~~, wherein said information comprises, for each one of said tasks, an appropriate resource, a data source, at least one design tool and a duration;

prioritizing said tasks based on dependency between said tasks to create a design project plan, wherein said first task is a prerequisite for said second task;

creating an encryption key for each one of said tasks,

wherein said encryption key comprises a name of said appropriate resource for said one of said task, a start date for said one of said tasks, an end date for said one of said tasks, said data source for said one of said tasks and said at least one design tool for said one of said tasks,

wherein said encryption key for each said one of said tasks is used to automatically notify said appropriate resource of task responsibilities and allows access by said appropriate resource to said data source and said at least one design tool ~~for a limited period of time~~ from said start date to said end date, and

wherein creation of said encryption key for said second task is gated until completion of said first task;

automatically monitoring work being performed on said tasks through a computerized network, wherein said monitoring comprises using a polling function to observe whether a resource is actively working on a task; and

automatically notifying a project team leader of task completion status, overdue tasks, and tasks being ignored, based on said monitoring.

16. (Previously Presented) The program storage device in claim 15, wherein said monitoring includes observing whether a said resource is actively working on said task exclusively by observing network activity of said resource.

17. (Original) The program storage device in claim 15, wherein said method further comprises automatically scheduling a meeting of all corresponding resources if a task becomes overdue.

18. (Original) The program storage device in claim 15, wherein said method further comprises producing periodic status reports based on said monitoring.

19. (Original) The program storage device in claim 15, wherein said method further comprises automatically notifying said resources of additional tasks as prerequisite tasks are completed.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~method~~ program storage device in claim 15, wherein said method further comprises automatically searching for additional resources for tasks that are overdue.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance.

The present invention is directed to a project management system and method for micromanaging a design project wherein designers are notified of their task assignments and are permitted to access, for a defined period of time, the specific project data and specific design tools required to complete their assigned tasks through the creation of task-specific encryption keys whose creation is gated by the completion of the previous dependent task. Additionally, the project management system and method utilizes a polling function to monitor a designer's network activity to determine such things as the number of hours and minutes that a designer devotes to actively working on a particular task in real time.

The closest prior art Hung Chak Kuen Patrick, Secure Workflow Model (2001), and Simmons et al., Software Project Planning Associate (SPPA): A Knowledge- Based Approach for Dynamic Software Project Planning and Tracking (2000) fail to teach or suggest either singularly or in combination micromanaging a design project through the use of encryption keys that notify designers of their task responsibilities and lock/unlock project tasks such that designers (project resources) can only access, for the specified period of time, the specific task data and the specific design tools necessary to complete the now unlocked task that has been assigned to them wherein the encryption key includes the name of the appropriate resource for the task, the start and end dates

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for the task, the data source for the task and at least one design tool for the task and is only created after the previous dependent task has been completed as recited in independent Claims 1, 8 and 15.

Thomas R.K. et al., Task-based Authorization Controls (TBAC, 1997) teach a task-specific ("just-in-time", "need-to-do") user authorization system and method wherein "Access mediation now involves authorizations at various points during the completion of tasks in accordance with some application logic" (Abstract) and "permissions are constantly monitored and activated and deactivated in accordance with emerging content associated with progress tasks (such as in workflows)" (Paragraph 2, Page 1; Figures 3-6); however, Thomas R.K. et al. fails to teach or suggest micromanaging a design project through the use of encryption keys that notify designers of their task responsibilities and activate/deactivate assigned project tasks, specific project data and specific project design tools associated with the task wherein the encryption key includes the name of the appropriate resource for the task, the start and end dates for the task, the data source for the task and at least one design tool for the task and further wherein the creation of encryption key is gated by the complete of the previous dependent task as recited in independent Claims 1, 8 and 15.

Additionally Hung, Simmons et al. and Thomas R.K. et al. fail to teach or suggest automatically monitoring work being performed on the tasks through a computerized network, wherein the monitoring comprises the use of a polling function to observe network activity of the designers (resources) and determine if the designers are actively working on a task as recited in independent Claims 1, 8 and 15.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- Deinhart et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,911,143, teach a system and method for providing role-based access control for secure access to data and/or applications over a computer network.

- Redman et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,978,476, teach a system and method for restricting user access to project design data.

- Skinner et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,622,116, teach a system and method for actively monitoring user's activities to determine such things as the amount of time spent on tasks and work performed.

- Hartigan et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,832,176, teach a system and method for actively monitoring, over a computer network, a user's activities.

- Freeman et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0087381, teach a project management system and method for actively, in real-time, monitoring user's project task activities and work progress.

- Thomas, R.K. et al., Task-Based Authorization: A Paradigm for Flexible and Adaptable Access Control in Distribute Applications (1993), teach a system and method for providing access control and security management of individual users and/or roles at the project task level wherein users are only authorized to perform the tasks assigned to them.

- Bertino, E. et al., A Flexible Model Supporting the Specification and Enforcement of Role-Based Authorizations in Workflow Management Systems (1997), teach a system and method for providing user/role-based access control at the task level wherein the task-specific user authorization occurs when the tasks are activated (i.e. authorization for task data/resources is determined and authorized at the beginning of each task, task activation).

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott L. Jarrett whose telephone number is (571) 272-7033. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00AM - 5:00PM.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hafiz Tariq can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

SJ

12/16/2006


TARIQ R. HAFIZ
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800